



Date of Meeting: May 7, 2026

TOWN OF LEESBURG
PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

Subject: TLZNOA2026-0002 Zoning Ordinance Rewrite

Staff Contact: Michael Watkins, Zoning Administrator
Brian Boucher, Deputy Director
James David, Director

Applicant: Town Council ([Resolution No. 2023-034](#))

Proposal: 2026 Rewrite of the Town of Leesburg Zoning Ordinance

Recommendation: Forward a recommendation of approval to the Town Council, based on finding the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite implements Legacy Leesburg Town Plan policies including the new Crescent District Master Plan, streamlines process, modernizes zoning standards and practices, and restructures the document to improve usability.

Draft Motions:

Approval

I move to adopt the proposed Planning Commission Resolution recommending approval of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite, dated May 7, 2026, and included as Attachment 1.

OR

Work Session

I move that the Planning Commission forward TLZNOA2026-0002 Zoning Ordinance Rewrite to a future Planning Commission Work Session with the following direction to staff:

Background: At their July 20, 2023 Public Meeting, the Planning Commission received an introductory presentation on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project. In October 2023, representatives from Kendig Keast Collaborative (Consultant) presented their code audit of the Town's current Zoning Ordinance and broad recommendations for changes at a joint meeting of the Planning Commission and Town Council. In February and September 2024, the consultants delivered their first draft of the new Ordinance via the Town's enCodePlus online zoning platform and provided an overview of concepts in each Article to the Planning Commission. The first draft of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite was released on March 6, 2025 for a 60-day public review period. The second draft of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite was released on November 17, 2025 for a 45-day public review period. The third draft of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite was released on April 2, 2026 and is available for public review. All Planning Commission and public presentations and the code audit are available on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project page at: leesburgva.gov/zoningordinancerewrite.

Issues: The Planning Commission has held 23 work sessions on the draft Zoning Ordinance Rewrite since January 16, 2025. The draft is in good shape as a result of the Commission's work.

Two Commissioners submitted remaining comments, questions, or edits on April 16, 2026 and April 20, 2026. The Commission also received public comments at the April 16, 2026 Public Hearing. The May 7, 2026 staff report and attachments include staff responses to outstanding questions, comments, and edits from Commissioners and the public.

Public Comment and Responses

There were eight public speakers at the April 16, 2026 Public Hearing on the Planning Commission Draft Zoning Ordinance Rewrite:

1. Ms. Amy Sibley, 823 Melody Ct SE, noted her appreciation for the usability of the draft Zoning Ordinance Rewrite as well as the new residential allowance which would allow her to finally finish her porch project.

Staff response: Thank you!

2. Ms. Suzanne Larkins, 3 Royal St SE, expressed concern about the reduction of rights for residential homeowners in the Downtown District citing concerns over safety, noise, and preservation of historic structures caused by the lack of setbacks and increased height in this district.

Staff response: Ms. Larkins' residential structure is in the commercial Downtown District (DT). It's difficult from a zoning standpoint to treat it as a special house in a commercial district, because residential structures can become non-residential structures, then they can go back to residential structures, then they can become commercial again. To single that out and provide protections just for that historic house, which is located in an existing commercial district, is challenging.

3. Ms. Molly Novotny of Curata Partners, representing St. John's Properties at Leegate, spoke about the flex/industrial uses in the Innovation Center District, specifically asking that "warehouse" be a separate unique use under the Industrial Use Category in the Use Table rather than with the "Uses Other than Listed" which would require a special exception review. She handed the Commission a memo with a list of comments and requests.

Staff response: Leegate is a proffered rezoning. Any changes to that proffered rezoning must go back through another rezoning. That's a public process that's going to have Planning Commission and Council review. All of the comments from Ms. Novotny have been loaded into enCodePlus. Staff has responded to each comment in the Public Feedback Report with Staff Responses (Attachment 4).

4. Ms. Morgan Hadlock of Curata Partners spoke on behalf of Rappaport, the owner of Village at Leesburg, regarding the Mixed Use Zoning District specifically referencing concerns about the height restrictions, the 50 acre threshold for modification, and aligning commercial uses of the MU district to what is currently allowable under the current zoning, like research and development and certain flex/industrial uses. She handed the Commission a memo with a list of comments and requests.

Staff response: The Village of Leesburg is a proffered rezoning. Any changes to that proffered rezoning must go back through another rezoning. That's a public process that's going to have Planning Commission and Council review. All of the comments from Ms. Hadlock have been loaded into enCodePlus. Staff has responded to each comment in the Public Feedback Report with Staff Responses (Attachment 4).

5. Mr. Michael Waters, 9 Morven Park Rd SW, spoke about his experience as a homeowner in the Historic District over the years and his experience with his property's land disturbance after a storm drain was added to his property. He asked that the Town be considerate with the impacts to homes in future developments and include more follow up with developers who conduct offsite work.

Staff response: Impacts to residential properties resulting from storm drain infrastructure projects are not relevant to the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Waters' concerns have been relayed to appropriate staff in the Department of Public Works and Capital Projects.

6. Ms. Elizabeth Stutzmann, 500 Twintree Ter NE, expressed concerns about biohazards, large generators, and nuisance issues to nearby residents from the Leesburg Gateway proposal. She asked the status of the Leesburg Gateway rezoning.

Staff response: The Commission has not reviewed the rezoning application for Leesburg Gateway. The Commission recommended denial on the Leesburg Gateway Town Plan Amendment, which proposed modifying Town Plan policy language to support data centers at the subject property.

7. Mr. Howard Moody, a homeowner in the Historic District, asked about the timing of approval for the new ordinance as he would like the update for maximum floor area for an accessory dwelling unit to take effect. He asked if he could appeal to be subject to the draft ZO Rewrite now.

Staff response: The Council must adopt the new Zoning Ordinance before it takes effect for any property in Town.

8. Mr. Ara Bagdasarian, 301 S King St, stated that having a designated area outside of residential for data centers in a "data center district" would be a good idea near the Airport, and asked for increased walkability in the Downtown District with a focus on pedestrians, and an elimination of the parking minimum.

Staff response: Most of the land on the west side of the Airport is proposed for Industrial Research Park (IR) zoning, which allows data centers by special exception. To date, the Council and Planning Commission do not support eliminating minimum parking requirements for Downtown residential uses. The Downtown parking exemption only applies to reuse of existing nonresidential buildings for nonresidential purposes.

The Town also received a memo from Fianna Investments, LLC on April 8, 2026 regarding the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite. The recommendations from this memo have been loaded into enCodePlus. Staff has responded to each comment in the Public Feedback Report with Staff Responses (Attachment 4).

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Tuck submitted follow-up comments from the April 16, 2026 Public Hearing via email on April 20, 2026. Ms. Tuck's email with staff responses (in red) is included as Attachment 5. Commissioner Robinson submitted final review comments on April 16, 2026. Ms. Robinson's comments with staff responses (in red) are included as Attachment 6. The following decision points have been extracted from these Commissioner comments to guide the Commission's discussion on May 7, 2026:

1. Does the Commission want to merge Division 10, *Limited Use Standards* and Division 11, *Special Exception Use Standards* into one division for all use standards?
2. Does the Commission want to change the level of permissibility for any uses or use categories in Division 9, *Use Tables* (i.e. Prohibited, Permitted, Limited, Special Exception)?
3. Does the Commission want to modify the Division 11, *Special Exception Standards*, for "Places of Worship and Public Assembly?" The current standards are maximum number of seats/occupancy is 1,500 seats in Commercial Neighborhood (CN) and residential districts, and 5,500 seats in mixed use and nonresidential districts (see Sec. 11-3.H).
4. Does the Commission want to raise the maximum building height for the Mixed Use (MU) District from 60 feet to 70 feet? Note that max building height in MU is 45 feet when adjoining a residential district.
5. Does the Commission want to eliminate minimum parking requirements for residential uses in the Downtown (DT) District?
6. Does the Commission want to eliminate the on-street parking credit for the Crescent District (See Sec. 5-7.E.2)?
7. Does the Commission want to eliminate "Public Utility, Major" in all Crescent District Subdistricts?
8. Does the Commission want to recommend limitations on the Board of Architectural Review's (BAR) authority to grant alterations to Zoning standards? As proposed, the BAR can reduce setbacks and maximum building height in the DT District, and make modifications to the location, size, and height of a detached residential accessory structure in the Old and Historic Overlay (H-1) District (See Table 5-5-1 Table Notes and Sec. Sec. 12-2.B.3).
9. Are there any other proposed changes based on public or Commissioner comments related to the April 16, 2026 Public Hearing?

Next Steps

The May 7, 2026 Planning Commission Work Session is another of many opportunities throughout the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project for members of the public to provide input. It

marks the end of the Commission's work on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite unless the Commission determines further work sessions are needed. It is anticipated that the Town Council will begin their review of the Planning Commission Draft of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite in Summer 2026.

Attachments:

1. Draft Planning Commission Resolution
2. Draft Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Map
3. Draft Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Text (Redline)
4. Public Comment Report with Staff Responses (as of April 2, 2026)
5. Commissioner Tuck Comments with Staff Responses
6. Commissioner Robinson Comments with Staff Responses

Online Content:

1. Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Map – <https://leesburgva.info/zorewritemap>
2. Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Text – <https://leesburgva.info/zorewritetext>